(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the steps taken and being taken in that direction so far?

THE FINANCE MINISTER (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) during the 30th Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum 2000, Finance Minister reinforced the Government's commitment to the ongoing economic reforms and initiatives. He also pointed out that globalization can lead to destabilization of economy and there was a need to follow the right domestic sector policy, especially in financial sector and manage external debt prudently. No specific plan was discussed.

(b) Does not arise.

Note submitted by ASSOCHAM on devolution of Funds to States

2048. SHRI CM. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to slate:

(a) whether the Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industry has in a note submitted recently pointed that failure to fulfil a commitment by the Centre made in the 1997-98 budget to give a better deal to the States from the present 29% devolution, by way of amendment to the Constitution of India is resulting in a financial burden of Rs. 4,000 crore annually to the States;

(b) what was the precise allegation made by ASSOCHAM and what Constitutional Amendment was sought to be made; and

(c) what is Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) to (c) It is incorrect that the States have suffered a financial burden of Rs. 4,000 crore annually due to non-implementation of the Alternative Scheme of Devolution. The Alternative Scheme of Devolution as recommended by Tenth Finance Commission has been approved by the Government, with some modifications and the enabling Constitutional (89th) Amendment Bill, 2000 has already been introduced in the Lok Sabha on 9th March, 2000.

Tax Payers in the country

2049. SHRI SANATAN BISI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the total number of tax payers would cross 25 million by March, 2000; and